

THE CARIBBEAN BASIN SECURITY INITIATIVE: A SHARED REGIONAL SECURITY PARTNERSHIP



"Too many people in the Americas live in fear. We must not tolerate violence and insecurity.... Children must be safe to play in the street, and families should never face the pain of a kidnapping. Policemen must be more powerful than kingpins, and judges must advance the rule of law."

— President Barack Obama

Rising crime and violence in the Caribbean, largely related to the drug trade, threaten regional security and stability. President Obama announced his intent to pursue a security partnership with the Caribbean at the Fifth Summit of the Americas, held in Port of Spain, Trinidad, in April 2009. Since then, U.S. and Caribbean government representatives have met four times to jointly define and develop the goals and scope for the Caribbean Basin Security Initiative (CBSI).

Ongoing Collaboration

The governments of the Caribbean broke new ground in April 2008 by agreeing to develop a common regional strategy and operational framework, and they continue to embrace President Obama's call for greater cooperation. Strong political will on all sides will lead to effective common cause on this critical issue.

More than a series of programs, this partnership will be an ongoing collaboration that draws upon and helps develop the capacity of the Caribbean to address common and related challenges. Partnership activities will complement other regional efforts, such as the Merida Initiative and the Central America Regional Security Initiative. They also will mitigate

Key objectives of the CBSI Partnership

- Substantially reduce illicit trafficking
- Increase public safety and security
- Promote social justice

any "balloon effect" – criminal spillover resulting from successful reductions in drug trafficking and transnational crime elsewhere in the region. CBSI will also serve as a coordinating venue to attract and incorporate the support from non-Caribbean allies in pursuit of its key objectives.

U.S. Financial Support

The State Department has committed to fully fund the President's \$45 million request for CBSI. After working-level consultations with Congress, \$37 million was appropriated for FY 2010. FY 2010 funding will combat drug trafficking and organized crime, strengthen the rule of law, and promote social justice. The Obama Administration's FY 2011 request for CBSI is \$79 million.

Security Cooperation Dialogue

The Inaugural Caribbean-U.S. Security Cooperation Dialogue will take place in Washington, D.C. on May 27, 2010. Participants are expected to agree on a declaration of principles, framework for engagement, and a broad plan of action. All members of CARICOM, the Dominican Republic, and partner nation observers will attend. Other governments already active throughout the Caribbean are also being invited.